

REMARKS

Status of the Application

Claims 1-6, 10-15 and 19-46 are all the claims pending in the Application, as claims 43-46 are hereby added. Claims 1, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13, 19 and 23-34 have been rejected.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 35-43 are allowed.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 2, 5, 6, 11, 14, 15 and 20-22 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. However, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner hold in abeyance such rewriting until the Examiner has had an opportunity to reconsider (and withdraw) the prior art rejection of the other claims.

Obviousness Rejection

The Examiner has rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a): (1) claims 1, 10 and 19 as being unpatentable over *Koike* (US 5,550,647; hereinafter “*Koike*”) in view of *Kuwata et al.* (US 6,055,071; hereinafter “*Kuwata*”) or *Satou et al.* (US 5,838,465; hereinafter “*Satou*”); (2) claims 1, 10, 19, 23, 25-27, 29-31, 33 and 34 as being unpatentable over *Yamakawa* (US 6,014,462; hereinafter “*Yamakawa*”) in view of *Kuwata* or *Satou*; (3) claims 3, 4, 12, 13, 24, 28 and 32 as being unpatentable over *Koike* or *Yamakawa* in view of what the Examiner has called “*Applicant’s Admitted Prior Art*” (hereinafter “*APA*”); and (4) claims 24, 28 and 32 as being unpatentable over *Yamakawa* in view of the *APA*. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent Claims 1, 10 and 19

Applicant respectfully submits that none of the applied references, either alone or in any reasonable combination, teach or suggest tone correction “based on gamma characteristics, of the image forming apparatus, having a value resolution higher than a value resolution of the input tone level data.”

Yamakawa, Satou, Koike and Kuwata all fail to disclose, teach or suggest the use of such relatively higher value resolution data to perform tone correction in their respective systems.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 10 and 19 are patentable over the applied references. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that rejected dependent claims 3, 4, 12, 13 and 23-34 are allowable, *at least* by virtue of their dependency.

Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

New Claims

Claims 44-46 are hereby added. Claims 44-46 are fully supported *at least* by lines 10-17 on page 4 of the instant Application. Claims 44-46 are respectfully submitted to be allowable by virtue of the features recited therein.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-6, 10-15 and 19-46 are allowable. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the application now is in condition for allowance with all of the claims 1-6, 10-15 and 19-46.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appln. No.: 09/369,424

Attorney Docket # Q55331

Please charge any fees which may be required to maintain the pendency of this application, except for the Issue Fee, to our Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,



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